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ABSTRACT

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (Public Law 93-247 as amended) provides financial assistance for, among other purposes, demonstration programs aimed at prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. To encourage innovative approaches to identifying, treating, and preventing child abuse at the community level, the Texas Department of Human Resources invites each of its 12 administrative regions to participate in a competitive process for receiving grants. Proposals with demonstrated or promised community support and resources receive consideration for receipt of grant funds. The brief annual reports collected in this document describe the activities of seven grant recipients; specifically provided for each are an overview of the project, statements of objectives, summaries of progress made in attaining objectives, and other related information. Projects reporting are (1) the Special Investigative Services Project, (2) the Impact of Protective Services Project, (3) the Project to Study Fair-Hearings Practices in Child Protective Services, (4) the Group Services for Child Protective Clients Project, (5) the Foster Child Advocate Services Project (a guardian ad litem program), (6) the Coordinated Approach to Investigations and Information-Sharing Project, and (7) the Waco Center for Youth Liaison Project. (RH)

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Annual Report

September 1, 1982, through August 31, 1983

INNOVATIONS IN PROTECTIVE SERVICES

September 30, 1983

PS 014110

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Office of Research, Demonstration, and Evaluation
Texas Department of Human Resources

INNOVATIONS IN PROTECTIVE SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT

P.L. 93-247 State NCCAN Grant Funds

September 30, 1983

Submitted by

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INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS

As the recipient of the child abuse and neglect state grant funds, the Texas Department of Human Resources (DHR) is responsible for their effective utilization. The purpose of the state grants program is to support the states in developing, strengthening, and carrying out child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment programs. One of the program's priorities is "innovative prevention and treatment programs which hold promise for adding a new dimension of service for abused and neglected children and their families." DHR is using this priority as a guide for distributing the grant funds.

The overall goals of this project are as follows:

1. strengthen permanency planning,

2. expand urban and rural sexual abuse projects,

3. strengthen intake and investigation,

4. strengthen in-home service delivery, and

5. expand the usefulness of information systems.

To promote innovation and cost-efficiency, DHR designed a competitive process for awarding the funds. Six projects were approved through the competitive process; two of the six are researching investigative techniques for alleged abuse/neglect complaints. One additional project serves children in DHR conservatorship who are appointed guardians ad litem to aid in permanency planning. Refer to figure 1 for project locations.

PROJECT FUNDING

Six of the regional projects have some state support either as cash or in-kind contributions, coming primarily from Title XX and Title IV-B funds. As a result, the total effort going into these innovative projects considerably exceeds the amount of state grants through P.L. 93-247.

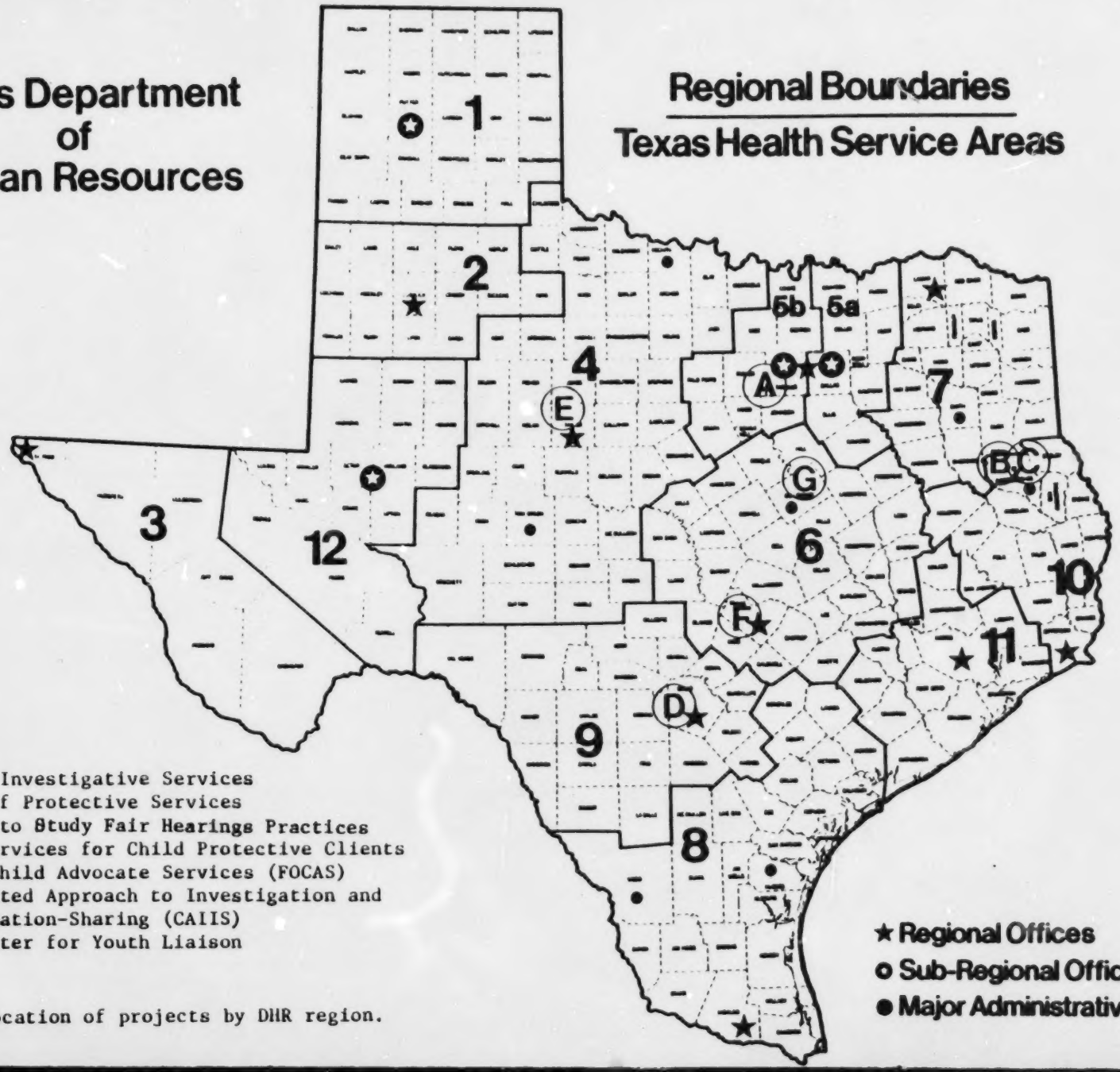

Figure 1. Location of projects by DHR region.

A seventh project funded by the state grant funds has a statewide focus: a liaison function at the Waco Center for Youth, a joint activity of DHR and the Texas Department of Mental health and Mental Retardation. The center predominantly serves children under DHR conservatorship. The liaison function is essential to maintenance of a good working relationship between the agencies; good agency relationships are basic requirements for a sound placement process. In-kind support of the project is also provided by DHR.

Funds are also allocated for administration and evaluation of activities. DHR's Protective Services for Children Branch works with the Office of Research, Demonstration, and Evaluation (ORDE) in carrying out these tasks. Accomplishments of the projects are detailed in the individual project annual reports contained in the following sections of this document. (The project's evaluation is reported in a separate document.)

1

Special Investigative Services

ANNUAL REPORT

OVERVIEW

Several problems have developed in the implementation of an amendment to the Texas Family Code requiring that law enforcement agencies and the Texas Department of Human Resources (DHR) report all child abuse and neglect to each other. Although child placement workers attempt to notify law enforcement agencies of all intakes, law enforcement agencies lack the time or capacity to screen all offenses where criminal abuse is alleged. This is especially a problem in the large urban areas, and it usually results in returning the screening responsibility to child placement workers.

In November 1981, the Tarrant County Protective Services for Children Division started the Special Investigative Services Project. The protective services staff and the district attorney's office designed and implemented a cooperative agreement for the disposition of criminal cases of child abuse and neglect. The agreement includes the hiring of three certified law enforcement officers by the Tarrant County District Attorney's Office; they assist child protective services staff and other law enforcement offices in Tarrant County in the pursuit of criminal cases of child abuse and neglect, and they provide specialized investigative help on civil investigations. In addition to paid staff, in-kind assistance is provided in the form of civil and criminal assistant district attorneys' time for special consultation and special prosecution on civil and criminal cases. The three investigators also screen new cases involving child abuse and neglect to see whether criminal prosecution might be appropriate. The DHR project coordinator is also the intake supervisor for Tarrant County child welfare, which ensures that all cases are reviewed by law enforcement officials for possible criminal prosecution.

The goal of this project is for the district attorney's office to review all cases appropriate for criminal prosecution through the use of certified law enforcement officers under the direct supervision of the district attorney's office, thus ensuring that discretionary prosecution decisions are made at the most appropriate level on all cases involving possible criminal offenses.

FIRST-YEAR OBJECTIVES

Four of the project's first-year (1982) objectives have been completed:

- o Objective 1: to develop and implement a system of criminal case review/investigation by the district attorney's office of suspected child abuse;
- o Objective 2: to increase the number of criminal case reviews/investigations by the district attorney's office of suspected child abuse;
- o Objective 3: to increase the number of criminal cases of suspected child abuse filed; and
- o Objective 4: to increase the number of criminal cases of suspected child abuse brought to trial.

SECOND-YEAR OBJECTIVES

In October 1982, the innovative system of criminal case review and investigation was continued for another year. An additional year added credibility for the program and enhanced the possibility of a permanent system in Tarrant County. The second-year objectives focused on the need to incorporate project efforts into the community structure, provision of a means of replication, and evaluation of the effects of police involvement in child protective services cases.

Six specific objectives were set for the project's second year:

- o Objective 1: to incorporate services provided by the project into the existing community structure;
- o Objective 2: to increase the number of criminal case reviews/investigations by the district attorney's office of suspected child abuse;
- o Objective 3: to increase the number of criminal cases of suspected child abuse filed;
- o Objective 4: to increase the number of criminal cases of suspected child abuse brought to trial;

- Objective 5: to determine the effects of police involvement in the investigation of child protective services cases; and

- Objective 6: to provide presentations and training on the project model to all requesting regions in the state.

STATUS OF OBJECTIVES

The following paragraphs summarize progress toward project objectives.

Objective 1: to incorporate services provided by the project into the existing community structure. As early as the first quarter of the project year, October 1982, DHR recognized the value of this project and began to direct its efforts toward exploring ways to incorporate the services of three investigators into the existing community structure. Since funding from the current source was not available, the program director for child protective services (CPS) and the district attorney's office began exploring other possible funding sources. The lead program director, supported by the district attorney, submitted a budget request to the Tarrant County Commissioner's Court that included salaries for three investigators to continue the work of this project. The commissioner's court granted continuation funding for the investigators and assumed funding responsibility for them on September 1, 1983, when the project grant funds were discontinued.

Objective 2: to increase the number of criminal case reviews/investigations by the district attorney's office of suspected child abuse. The special investigative unit increased the total number of contacts during the project year from September 1982 to August 1983 and the number of cases filed. The special investigative unit also assisted the police department in criminal investigations. The exact data will be reported in a separate evaluation of this project.

Objective 3: to increase the number of criminal cases of suspected child abuse filed. The number of suspected child abuse cases undergoing criminal investigations has increased during the project year. Cases previously reported but not pursued for possible criminal investigations are now being reviewed for follow-up. Local municipalities are now seeking advice and assistance from the three investigators; on occasion they relinquish jurisdiction over child abuse/neglect cases and request follow-up investigative services from the investigative unit. The liaison efforts of the investigators have resulted in more joint investigations between DHR and local law enforcement officers, and there is now some uniformity in investigative

procedures from one municipality to another. The investigative unit has also served as a liaison between DHR and the district attorney's office. The investigators have been able to assist the district attorney's office in gathering facts and evidence needed to strengthen cases that otherwise might have been dropped because of lack of evidence.

Objective 4: to increase the number of criminal cases of suspected child abuse brought to trial. The number of law enforcement agencies involving themselves with the special investigative unit has continued to increase over the project year. The result has been a dramatic increase in the number of cases of child abuse/neglect now being investigated by law enforcement agencies that would not previously involve themselves in cases of this nature. The interaction between the law enforcement agencies and the investigative unit has been positive, and a number of criminal cases filed by the investigators are being scheduled for trial dates. Data on the disposition of cases were collected through July 1983 and will be reported separately.

Objective 5: to determine the effects of police involvement in investigation of child protective services cases. DHR and Texas Christian University (TCU) were awarded a grant by the Hogg Foundation on September 27, 1982, for a joint evaluation project to study the impact of law enforcement involvement with families of victims of sexual abuse. The evaluation will measure short- and long-term impact on families. The grant period for the evaluation project runs from October 1, 1982, through January 21, 1984. In order to assist local law enforcement officials, the investigative unit developed a protocol for setting priorities in child abuse referrals and investigating child abuse reports. A meeting was arranged to share this protocol; it has been implemented and has improved communication among DHR, the investigative unit, and law enforcement agencies.

Objective 6: to provide presentations and training on the project model to all requesting regions in the state. Community presentations explaining the project and its purpose were given during the year to civic organizations throughout Tarrant County. Arrangements have been made to present a workshop about the project at the statewide annual child protective services conference to be held in February 1984. A paper was prepared and submitted for presentation at the American Public Welfare Association conference held in June 1983. Members of the investigative unit served as liaisons to the Texas Department of Public Safety's criminal investigations school in Austin. The special techniques used by the investigators were taught at the Tarrant County Junior College Regional Police Academy. The training was given to both evening and day classes. Instruction was

also provided for Tarrant County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Center. During this project the Galveston District Attorney's Office visited Fort Worth and sought information about possible implementation of the project in that area. Printed material outlining the development and accomplishments of this project are now available upon request to inquiring regions.

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR

A local business has donated new video equipment for the investigators' use in interviewing child abuse and sexual abuse victims. Tarrant County judges and attorneys are now allowing videotaped interviews to be used as testimony in grand jury presentations. Videotape has eliminated the need for victims to repeat their accounts of incidents to several different law enforcement entities. The special investigative unit received a donation of two anatomically correct dolls for use in investigations and during trial proceedings. Presentations have been made to the Mid-Cities Parent-Teacher Organization. A description of the implementation methodology for this project has been prepared and will be disseminated upon request.

2

Impact of Protective Services

ANNUAL REPORT

OVERVIEW

Region 10 of the Texas Department of Human Resources (DHR) regularly operates two computer-based management information systems to assist various levels of the staff in case management, supervision, and program administration. The Impact of Protective Services Project will complement these established systems.

The two existing systems are (1) the Protective Services Management Information System (PSMIS), which monitors case activities; and (2) the Contract Management Information System (CMIS), which assists in developing, managing, and evaluating purchased social services. The Impact of Protective Services Project has developed a third computer-based system that evaluates the impact of specified purchased services on client outcomes. This new system, when linked to the existing ones, will provide a unique and comprehensive data base for the assessment of outcomes, tracking of costs, and the administration of child protective services.

OBJECTIVES

Each objective of the Impact of Protective Services Project is directed toward the development, design, and implementation of a computer-based system that will allow DHR to identify and measure the impact of specific contracted protective services on its clients. Three specific objectives were to be completed during the 12-month project.

- Objective 1: to create a regionally based system to provide data on client outcomes as a result of contracted service delivery from providers in the areas of parenting and homemaker services. (Other contracted services--e.g., counseling, group home services, and protective day care services will be added after the initial pilot.)

- Objective 2: to develop a computer-generated reporting system that details the efficiency of purchased services and is maximally useful to workers, supervisors, contract evaluators, and regional staff.

- Objective 3: to integrate the proposed system with the existing PSMIS designed for direct delivery services and a CMIS designed for managing purchased services, with the purpose of developing a comprehensive data base for child protective services in Region 10.

STATUS OF OBJECTIVES

The following paragraphs summarize progress made toward accomplishment of the project's stated objectives.

Objective 1: to create a regionally based system to provide data on client outcomes as a result of contracted service delivery from providers in the area of parenting and homemaker services. Behaviorally specific assessment scales for homemaker and parenting services were developed and approved for use by the already existing Regional Management Information System (MIS) Monitoring Committee. Tracking forms to record client progress were developed, approved, and implemented. Programming was completed, and all collected data have been entered. All client progress is now tracked by computer. Manual tracking is no longer necessary.

Dr. Emily Vargas Adams was hired to serve as a consultant to assist with the development of an instrument to assess the effectiveness of protective day care services. Research in this area indicated that existing scales were inadequate and that a new instrument to measure behaviors of the protective services client population was needed.

A hired consultant trained selected staff members in the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The data used during the training were collected from homemaker/parenting assessment scales being used in the project.

The project added a data collection specialist to the staff in March 1983. The data collection specialist was responsible for retrieving collected data from homemaker/parenting instruments.

A client satisfaction evaluation instrument also was developed, and pilot testing began during the fourth quarter of the project year.

A system for providing data on client outcomes of purchased parenting and homemaker services was completed, and a computerized tickler system was developed to track the timeliness of the assessments. This objective has been accomplished.

Objective 2: to develop a computer-generated reporting system that details the efficiency of purchased services and is maximally useful to workers, supervisors, contract evaluators, and regional staff. In September 1982, the region contracted with John Anderson

and Associates for consultation in design of the computer-generated reporting system. In addition, a contract with Stephen F. Austin State University for computer time and terminal use was negotiated and implemented. Draft output documents were designed, completed, and presented to the Regional MIS Monitoring Committee for review and comment. Final approval of the output documents was given in the final quarter of the project year.

During the project year, the contract services staff explored the possibility of developing a partially automated referral system. Two regional subcommittees had responsibility for developing and finalizing this system. Procedures for partial automation of the referral system were designed, and programming for this system is under way.

The child protective services (CPS) staff reviewed assessment scales and procedures used to measure service effectiveness throughout the year. Through open communication and exchange of ideas, some procedural problems experienced by CPS staff members were examined and amended.

Discussions regarding the design of impact evaluations of group homes, emergency shelters, and counseling services have begun. The program director for CPS, the program director for purchased family and children's services, the chairperson of the Regional MIS Monitoring Committee, the contract manager, and the project manager will have responsibility for decisions regarding impact information necessary to evaluate these purchased services.

Objective 3: to integrate the proposed system with the existing PSMIS designed for direct delivery services and a CMIS designed for managing purchased services, with the purpose of developing a comprehensive data base for child protective services in Region 10. Development of the contract management system has continued. Programs were written to automate the bookkeeping system. Information about available contracted services has been entered into the system. The region contracted with a consulting firm to assist in successful integration of the PSMIS and CMIS systems. In August 1983, the region appointed a full-time coordinator for the three management information systems. The coordinator will be responsible for planning and coordination of programming, monitoring the status of objectives for each component, and ensuring the full integration of all three systems. Final drafts of revised homemaker and parenting forms were completed, and piloting began during the fourth quarter of the project year. The client satisfaction questionnaire was also in early stages of piloting during the fourth quarter of the project.

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR

Two presentations about the automated information system were made to senior staff of the Office of Services to Families and Children in Austin.

CONTINUATION

This project has received continuation funding for fiscal year 1983-1984. It is anticipated that the system to measure impact of other purchased services will be expanded and that data collection procedures and referral systems will be refined. Development and implementation of output reports for all protective purchased services will continue, and integration of the three systems will remain a primary objective of the project.

3

Project to Study Fair-Hearings Practices in Child Protective Services

ANNUAL REPORT

OVERVIEW

The Texas Department of Human Resources (DHR) provides fair hearings for all DHR social service clients. Department administrators are concerned about whether current provisions for fair hearings deal adequately with programmatic and legal issues involved in the provision of child protective services (CPS). Substantial legal and practice-related issues must be resolved before DHR can determine whether special fair-hearings policy and practice should be offered to CPS clients, and, if so, how and when. Recent legal actions against DHR have shown the need to clarify these issues and to investigate the need for a special fair-hearings policy. The Project to Study Fair-Hearings Practices in Child Protective Services studied issues related to fair hearings in order to determine whether special policy and practices were needed. The study indicated there is a need, and project staff members prepared model practices and related client materials.

OBJECTIVES

The Project to Study Fair-Hearings Practices in Child Protective Services involves researching current legal, social work, and practice-related issues. Based on this research, the project will develop, if appropriate, model practices and draft written materials for clients. DHR has set five objectives for this project:

- Objective 1: to design and conduct a study of current practices in fair hearings in CPS;
- Objective 2: to research social work and practice-related issues associated with fair hearings in CPS;
- Objective 3: to research legal issues involved in fair hearings in CPS;
- Objective 4: to develop model practices related to fair hearings in CPS, including the design of a pilot test to study implementation potential (this objective will be pur-

sued only if it is determined that fair hearings are legally required or programmatically indicated); and

- Objective 5: to prepare draft written materials for clients, which describe the services available to CPS clients and/or notify clients of their right to a fair hearing (this objective will be pursued only if it is determined that fair hearings are legally required or programmatically indicated).

STATUS OF OBJECTIVES

The following paragraphs summarize progress made toward accomplishment of the project's stated objectives.

Objective 1: to design and conduct a study of current practices in fair hearings in child protective services. Three nationally known consultants--Dr. Alexander Zaphris of the University of Houston Graduate School of Social Work, Dr. Donald T. Dickson of Rutgers University Graduate School of Social Work, and Professor Mark G. Yudof, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs of the University of Texas Law School--aided the project manager in determining the course the project should take. They served as advisors, and explored the legal and social work issues related to the question of fair hearings for CPS clients. An executive committee--made up of the DHR Region 10 attorney, the DHR Region 10 Director of Services to Families and Children, a protective services program specialist from DHR's state (central) office, two attorneys from the state office's Legal Division, and a representative from the Texas Attorney General's Office--also advised the project manager.

The project staff conducted a survey of current fair-hearings procedures. Forty-nine states responded to the survey questionnaire either in writing or by telephone. The study revealed the following current practices:

- the absence of routinely available fair hearings in CPS,
- the existence and substance of specific CPS policy relating to fair hearings,
- the use of notice to advise CPS clients of services available to them,
- the use of notice to advise CPS clients of their rights to a fair hearing, and

- o the anticipation of problems and benefits from required fair hearings.

Reviews of social work literature and current practices and procedures were conducted to determine the state of the art in fair-hearings procedures for CPS clients. Legal research was conducted to review existing statutes in due process protection specifically intended for CPS clients. This objective has been accomplished.

Objective 2: to research social work and practice-related issues associated with fair hearings in child protective services. A bibliography was compiled, and articles and abstracts in the field of social work that addressed the issue of fair hearings to CPS clients were reviewed. A consensus was reached by legal and social work consultants that something less than an extensive, formal fair hearing might be preferable for the purpose of CPS. A final recommendation by Professor Mark G. Yudof was made on the basis of his research into the constitutional requirements and implications of informal due process protection in preadjudicatory phases of CPS. Several alternatives to the traditional fair hearing were initially explored. These alternatives included: family team conferences, intensive family centered units, administrative review, administrative fair hearings, periodic reviews, rudimentary due process model, ombudsman model, natural justice model, external review panel, and hybrid advisory panel.

Based on Professor Yudoff's research, the executive committee made its final recommendation that an informal review was more desirable than the alternative formal appeals procedures. This objective has been accomplished.

Objective 3: to research legal issues in fair hearings in child protective services. Professor Mark G. Yudof had primary responsibility for researching constitutional requirements and implications of informal due process protection in preadjudicatory phases of CPS. Professor Yudof explored the theoretical dimensions of due process as related to CPS; he also conducted research on the issue of the impact of the new Title IV-B regulations on fair-hearings procedures and submitted his findings in June 1983.

In April 1983 the social work consultants first presented several alternatives to traditional fair hearings. These alternatives were discussed in June 1983 at the executive committee meeting along with Professor Yudof's report on the new Title IV-B regulations regarding fair-hearings procedures. This objective has been accomplished.

Objective 4: to develop model practices related to fair hearings in child protective services, including the design of a pilot test to study implementation potential (this objective will be pursued

only if it is determined that fair hearings are legally required or programmatically indicated). It was the consensus of the project manager, the regional administrative staff, the executive committee, and the consultants that fair hearings are required by federal regulations and are programmatically indicated. Specific recommendations were made by consultants regarding the pilot.

- The model should be used in some way to address the interests of the child(ren) involved.

- The notice of right to a hearing or alternative review should be given both orally and in writing.

- The process should be simple in nature in order to avoid serious problems that could develop from an inundation of requests for hearings or alternative reviews.

Another strong recommendation of the project manager and consultants was that the written notice, in pamphlet form, should be flexible, adaptable, oriented toward protecting clients (child and parents), and cost-efficient.

These recommendations of the consultants and the executive committee to the project manager resulted in the development of a pamphlet to be issued to CPS clients in a pilot to test fair-hearings practices or alternative reviews. The pamphlet was designed, approved by the executive committee, and is being reviewed by DHR's Legal Division. It will contain a definition of CPS, a description of decisions subject to agency review, and review procedures.

Objective 5: to prepare draft written materials for clients, which describe the services available to child protective services clients and/or notify clients of their right to a fair hearing (this objective will be pursued only if it is determined that fair hearings are legally required or programmatically indicated). The study to determine current practices revealed nationwide variations in the use of notices. Thrity-five states indicated fair hearings were available to CPS clients, but only nine said that these clients were routinely informed about this right.

Dr. Dickson talked to Delaware officials about clients' acceptance of the materials informing them of their rights, CPS workers' acceptance of the material, the impact that the issuance of the materials made on service delivery, and the volume of fair hearings requested. He learned that fair-hearings procedures had only been in effect six months and that it would be difficult to measure any perceived results. From this discussion in Delaware, a consensus emerged

that because the state was small geographically and in population it might be unwise to anticipate any of the same gains elsewhere that Delaware felt it had accomplished. A decision was made to formulate draft materials after Delaware's model and to put the materials into pamphlet format. Draft materials were circulated for review and comment in Region 10 to regional program directors and supervisory staff. DHR's legal staff is reviewing the final draft of the pamphlet, entitled "Child Protective Service: A Parent's Guide," which will be distributed to CPS clients during the test of the model.

CONTINUATION

The project has been granted continuation funding for Fiscal Year 1983-84. The pilot test of fair-hearings procedures will begin in the first quarter of the project's second year.

4

Group Services for Child Protective Clients

ANNUAL REPORT

OVERVIEW

Although group services have proven helpful for child protective services clients, such opportunities are limited in most Texas communities. Reduced funding and increased case loads make group work attractive as a service alternative for the Texas Department of Human Resources (DHR); however, without specific training, supervision, and practical assistance, workers are not likely to be able to use this method effectively. The Group Services for Child Protective Clients Project addresses this problem by designing and implementing a training program to enable protective services staff to provide group services proficiently. Group services are being initiated in both urban and rural areas, making use of project-trained staff and community volunteers. A mechanism also will be created to ensure continued training of staff and provision of supervised group services to clients after the project period ends.

OBJECTIVES

The project's aim was to improve the effectiveness of services provided to clients by making group services available to those who would benefit from them.

Specific objectives for the 12-month project period were--

- Objective 1: to design and implement a training program that will enable Region 9 protective services staff to provide group services to child protective clients in a proficient manner;

- Objective 2: to provide supervised group services to selected rural and urban child protective clients in Region 9, with project-trained workers serving as group leaders and community volunteers providing practical assistance; and

- Objective 3: to create a structure within the Region 9 protective services program that ensures continued training of staff and provision of supervised group services to child protective clients.

STATUS OF OBJECTIVES

The following paragraphs summarize progress during the quarter on each objective.

Objective 1: to design and implement a training program that will enable Region 9 protective services staff to provide group services to child protective clients in a proficient manner. During the initial implementation phase of the project, 17 orientation sessions on the project's major components were conducted by project staff members to solicit support for the training programs and to recruit facilitators for proposed client group services. Regional supervisors, program directors, caseworkers, and regional administrative staff members attended these sessions. In addition, specific training curricula were developed and implemented in formal training sessions. A group services training assessment scale was developed, and evaluation forms were developed by the project staff to assess functioning of groups and facilitator teams. Facilitators' knowledge of theory, of the practical use of group dynamics, and of techniques used to maximize group participation were also measured by the assessment scales. Other training made available through the project staff's efforts included a formal training session on working with dependent and neglectful mothers. Two professionals in San Antonio volunteered their time to conduct this workshop. Another training session, entitled "The Use of Volunteers in Child Abuse Treatment and the Use of Research in Establishing Treatment Programs," was attended by 65 members of Region 9's child protective services staff.

Objective 2: to provide supervised group services to selected rural and urban child protective clients in Region 9, with project-trained workers serving as group leaders and community volunteers providing practical assistance. The primary mechanism for referring clients for project services was a group referral form. This form was developed by the project staff and approved for use by protective services supervisory staff. Project staff members and human service specialists handled the flow of client referrals and monitored them to see whether they were appropriate for project services.

Clients had varied reactions to the idea of group services. They were unsure of the groups' intent, and they were not willing to risk themselves in the presence of strangers.

Group leaders addressed the issues of client selection, balanced composition of groups, and details of establishing groups.

Child protective services groups for both rural and urban clients were conducted during the project year. The project staff supervised cofacilitator teams on a weekly basis, and teams were assessed at intervals of four sessions. The project staff used the

group leadership rating scale to assess skill levels, strengths, and knowledge gaps. A full-time community service aide was hired. Her primary responsibilities were assessing and coordinating community volunteer groups. She was supervised by the group services coordinator.

Objective 3: to create a structure within the Region 9 protective services program that ensures continued training of staff and provision of supervised group services to child protective clients. To ensure the continuation of group services for protective services clients, alternatives have been explored with the steering committee, human services specialist, program director, and supervisory staff in consultation with the regional director of Services to Families and Children. DHR training personnel have been involved in structuring the training curriculum and evaluating its usefulness to participants.

Protective services supervisors and other persons who will continue to train group facilitators will be identified by the beginning of the next funding period. Because of the time demands placed on group facilitators, who maintain a regular case load as well as carrying out group activities, provisions have been made to make accommodations to them by (1) limiting their case load assignments during the startup of client groups and (2) giving them credit in their case load for the group activities. Staff members who facilitate groups during the current grant period also will be allowed and encouraged to facilitate groups during the new funding period.

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR

A three-day conference on sexual abuse of children was organized by project staff and held on April 27-29. The conference was sponsored by seven organizations: DHR Region 9; the San Antonio Coalition for Children, Youth, and Families; Trinity University; the University of Texas Health Science Center; the Community Guidance Center of Bexar County; the Alamo Council of Governments; and the Resource Center for Children, Youth, and Families (Region 6). Four hundred and thirty people registered for the conference. Evaluations by participants gave an overall rating of excellent to superior for the conference's contents and activities.

CONTINUATION

The project has been granted funding for Fiscal Year 1983-84. The focus of the project for the new grant period will be the expan-

sion of group services in rural and urban areas, refinement and strengthening of facilitators' leadership skill, continuation of support services, and strengthening agency support for planned training to ensure continuation of group services to clients after the project ends.

5

Foster Child Advocate Services

ANNUAL REPORT

OVERVIEW

The Foster Child Advocate Services (FOCAS) Project, conducted in Region 4 of the Texas Department of Human Resources (DHR), is a guardian ad litem program. Guardians ad litem are court-appointed members of the community who have volunteered their services to visit children in DHR conservatorship. Visits by the guardians ad litem allow a third party to observe the child's care arrangement and identify problems that may occur. FOCAS volunteers receive training on (1) the legal system as it pertains to child welfare and (2) the Protective Services for Children Program.

OBJECTIVES

Children in the FOCAS Project receive periodic visits from their guardian ad litem; information about the needs of children is shared among the project staff, the legal system, the community, and the protective services program as appropriate. The goals are to ensure the protection of children and to make the general community more aware of the needs of these children. To accomplish these goals, the following objectives have been set:

- Objective 1: to provide pertinent information about a child's situation to the court and the child welfare staff for use in planning decisions,
- Objective 2: to provide pertinent information to attorneys ad litem so that their responsibilities to the children are better fulfilled,
- Objective 3: to educate the community about child welfare services and the needs of children in the child welfare system,
- Objective 4: to increase the number of contacts with children in substitute care,

- o Objective 5: to identify and determine the extent of maltreatment of children in substitute care, and

- o Objective 6: to facilitate the resolution of problems encountered by children in court-ordered care.

STATUS OF OBJECTIVES

The following paragraphs summarize progress during the quarter on each objective.

Objective 1: to provide pertinent information about a child's situation to the court and the child welfare staff for use in planning decisions. The project experienced delays because there was confusion concerning management responsibilities and communication protocols. Four months elapsed after the scheduled startup date, September 1983, before the project manager was hired. A great deal of time was devoted to attempts to resolve questions raised by one district judge about liability protection for volunteers. The judge felt both he and the volunteers could be sued and that liability insurance was necessary for the protection of the guardians ad litem. After some difficulty, liability insurance was finally secured for all volunteers in the project.

In January 1983 a project manager was hired, and the first group of volunteer guardians ad litem were trained in February and March. In April and May 1983, the courts assigned eight citizen volunteers to serve as guardians ad litem to 11 children in substitute care. Guardians began visiting children in substitute care in May 1983. After each visit, they forwarded written reports to the child welfare supervisor, and these reports were kept in the children's permanent records. Plans will be made to include guardians ad litem in all case staffings held regarding permanent plans for any children to whom they have been assigned.

The impact of guardians ad litem on decisions made by judges cannot be determined at this time because of the late startup date and the short time that guardians ad litem have been operating.

Objective 2: to provide pertinent information to attorneys ad litem so that their responsibilities for children are better fulfilled. Guardians ad litem have not been able to significantly affect decisions made by judges and attorneys ad litem because of the short amount of time that they have been operating. It is anticipated that the forthcoming year will result in sufficient data to determine whether information furnished to the courts will be useful in developing permanency plans for children in substitute care.

Objective 3: to educate the community about child welfare services and the needs of children in the child welfare system. Project managers have made presentations about the program and its purposes to foster parents (both current and prospective), institutions, and biological parents with whom guardians will be working.

Training of volunteers to serve as guardians ad litem continued, and a core curriculum is being developed by the project to ensure continuity in materials presented to volunteers.

A committee has been organized to seek funding for continuation of the project when current funding ends in 1984. The fund-raising activities will also serve as a vehicle for educating the community about child protective services and the needs of children in the child protective services system.

Objective 4: to increase the number of contacts with children in substitute care. Volunteers were asked and have agreed to commit a minimum of one year of their time to the children after they have been appointed. They agreed to visit each child at least twice monthly, and more visits will be scheduled if the situation warrants.

Objective 5: to identify and determine the extent of maltreatment of children in substitute care. As of August 31, 1983, no incidents of maltreatment had been detected or suspected. If maltreatment is suspected, the volunteer is to immediately inform the project manager, who will report to the child protective services supervisor. If the project manager is unavailable, the child protective services supervisor must be informed about the alleged maltreatment directly by the volunteer.

Objective 6: to facilitate the resolution of problems encountered by children in court-ordered care. More time will be needed to detect and resolve problems encountered by children in court-ordered care. It is anticipated that the interest and participation of a third party in these proceedings will assist CPS staff and court officials in gathering facts and making decisions when permanency planning for children in substitute care is being done.

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR

In order to resolve management problems encountered in the first year of the project, the FOCAS steering committee decided to consolidate the fiscal responsibilities and day-to-day operations of the project by forming a nonprofit organization called the Wichita Foundation for Children's Services, Inc. The foundation assumed management of the project in the last quarter. DHR will negotiate a con-

tract with the foundation to conduct the second year of the project. This organization will also have primary responsibility for seeking continuation funding for the project beginning September 1, 1984.

CONTINUATION

The FOCAS Project has been granted funding for Fiscal Year 1983-84. The curriculum used to train volunteers will be examined for clarity and completeness during the next year. Training materials will be collected, revised, and prepared for inclusion in a format to be followed in future volunteer training sessions. This format will ensure uniformity of training to all volunteers accepted into the program.

6

Coordinated Approach to Investigations and Information-Sharing

ANNUAL REPORT

OVERVIEW

A body of legislation aimed at remedying a social problem often takes shape over a period of many years or decades in response to particular manifestations of the problem. In the process, roles and responsibilities often become confused, and coordination proves difficult. This is true of child protective services legislation as it affects investigations of abuse and neglect in 24-hour facilities. While the roles and responsibilities of law enforcement agencies and the Texas Department of Human Resources (DHR) are relatively clear when investigating allegations of abuse or neglect of children living in their own homes, the situation is less clear when investigating such allegations in facilities that provide 24-hour care.

The Coordinated Approach to Investigations and Information-Sharing (CAIIS) Project is conducting research to clarify roles and responsibilities for investigations in 24-hour facilities. Based on the research and an advisory committee's input, a model was developed for investigation and information-sharing by agencies that have responsibilities for investigations of child abuse/neglect at institutions.

OBJECTIVES

The CAIIS Project will (1) describe the roles, activities, and interrelationships of agencies with statutory responsibility for investigations in 24-hour facilities and (2) develop a model for conducting and documenting investigations and sharing their findings. The ultimate result expected is a more systematic and thorough investigation process that will ensure maximum protection of children in 24-hour care.

During the project's first year, four objectives were established and accomplished.

Objective 1: to describe and analyze relevant statues, agency policies and procedures, and explanatory and supporting material that agencies use in investigating reports of child abuse and neglect in 24-hour facilities. This analysis identified areas of responsibility, their overlaps, the population affected, and other information.

Objective 2: to review literature on the state of the art in investigations of reported child abuse in 24-hour care facilities.

The work performed in this step of analysis was expected to yield indications of sound casework and professional practice in this field.

Objective 3: to develop a general model for investigation of abuse and neglect in 24-hour care facilities. This objective was approached by comparing the products of the preceding two objectives and synthesizing a model that project staff and interagency advisory committee members believed was workable.

Objective 4: to design a pilot test of the model's salient features. A research design will be developed and completed based on information gathered during the first and second quarter.

STATUS OF OBJECTIVES

The following paragraphs summarize progress made toward meeting the project's objectives.

Objective 1: to describe and analyze relevant statutes, agency policies and procedures, and explanatory and supporting material that agencies use in investigating reports of child abuse and neglect in 24-hour facilities. The analysis of relevant statutes, agency policies and procedures, and supporting material used by agencies to investigate reports of child abuse and neglect in 24-hour facilities has been accomplished but will be an ongoing process throughout the life of the project. Project management, with consultation provided by an interagency advisory committee, identified areas of responsibility, their overlaps, and the affected populations.

A summary of state and federal statutes and regulations affecting institutional child abuse investigations has been compiled, finalized, and submitted to the advisory committee for review and comment. The project's staff completed a summary of policies of different agencies regarding access to and sharing of information about institutional child abuse and neglect investigations. The summaries addressed each agency's statutes, policies, and procedures on--

- release of information during investigations of abuse and neglect,
- routine sharing of information between state agencies and law enforcement officials,
- federal and state statutes,
- attorney general opinions and open records decisions that relate to institutional abuse and neglect investigations,

- o current policies and procedures of agencies in conducting institutional abuse and neglect investigations, and

- o current legal and regulatory definitions of child abuse and neglect.

Memos updating the project's progress were sent to DHR regional directors and program directors responsible for the delivery of services to abused/neglected children in 24-hour institutions.

Legislation passed in the regular session of the 68th Texas Legislature was monitored for its relevance to proposed model guidelines for investigative procedures in 24-hour institutions. A summary of relevant legislation was prepared, and the impact of the new laws was discussed with the advisory committee.

Objective 2: to review literature on the state of the art in investigations of reported child abuse in 24-hour care facilities. The intent of this objective was to review literature with the expectation that it would reveal the extent of knowledge available on sound casework and professional practice in the field of investigations of abuse and neglect in 24-hour care facilities. The project initiated and updated a computer-based literature search by the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect; collected bibliographies on institutional abuse investigations in 24-hour child care institutions; and collected books, articles, congressional reports, and other material on the subject of institutional abuse investigations. This subject-based bibliography has been completed and will be updated periodically throughout the project. Pertinent case studies from several states were researched, and project managers completed a workbook for use by the project staff and advisory committee members. Summaries of results from 12 projects sponsored by the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) were included in the material submitted to the advisory committee and other interested persons.

Relevant state and federal statutes and regulations pertinent to the investigation of child abuse in 24-hour child care facilities were researched, and brief summaries of these materials were prepared. Project managers have continued to collect new reports and materials concerning institutional child abuse investigations, and an addendum to the project bibliography has been prepared and will be distributed upon request. This objective has been accomplished.

Objective 3: to develop a general model for investigation of abuse and neglect in 24-hour care facilities. The model guidelines for conducting institutional child abuse investigations were drafted and revised twice during the project year. The final Proposed Model for Child Abuse and Neglect Investigations in Institutional Child Care

Facilities covers the following areas: (1) proposed definition of institutional child abuse and neglect; (2) information on rights of institutionalized children--individual rights, protection and sustenance rights, rights to achievement of developmental goals consistent with abilities, and therapeutic and protective intervention rights; (3) regulatory framework; (4) guidelines for pilot testing the model for investigations; (5) staff training; and (6) maintenance and sharing of information and statistics on institutional abuse/neglect.

Objective 4: to design a pilot test of the model's salient features. A final selection of the two DHR regions to pilot test the model guidelines has been made. Regions 6 (Austin) and 11 (Houston) will participate in the pilot. Initial contacts with both regional directors of Protective Services for Children (PSC) have been made, and discussion about their participation in the pilot test has been conducted. The final research design has been presented to the advisory committee for review. Discussions have also been held with Region 11 staff from DHR and the Texas Department of Health. PSC representatives in Region 6 have been introduced to plans for pilot test procedures.

Pilot test procedures have been discussed with DHR's Office of Research, Demonstration, and Evaluation, and plans have been initiated to use a computer program to store and manipulate data. A computer run depicting the number of children in geriatric and intermediate care facilities has been obtained. Programming for the computerized pilot test data has been completed. Plans are to begin the pilot test in October 1983 after staff training is finished.

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR

The project's management deliberately sought and obtained representatives from as many agencies and organizations as possible to serve on the advisory committee for the development of the model guidelines for investigations of abuse and neglect in 24-hour care facilities. Representatives came from the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, the Texas Education Association, the Texas Department of Health, the Texas Association of Licensed Children's Services, the Texas Youth Commission, the Texas Department of Human Resources, the Governor's Office of Youth Care Investigations, the Texas District and County Attorneys' Association, the Texas Police Association, the Attorney General's Office (Medicaid Fraud Control Unit), the Texas Sheriff's Association, and Advocacy, Inc. The committee met five times during the project year to discuss proposed

contents of the model guidelines and to review materials presented by the project managers.

Project staff and managers visited and toured four facilities to observe child care procedures, to solicit ideas for conducting thorough investigations, and to discuss the project's objectives.

An abstract of the project was submitted to the National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect and will be featured at the Sixth National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect to be held during September 1983 in Baltimore, Maryland.

7

Waco Center for Youth Liaison

ANNUAL REPORT

OVERVIEW

In a cooperative effort between the Texas Department of Human Resources (DHR) and the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (MHMR), the Texas Legislature authorized the first state-operated residential treatment program for emotionally and behaviorally disturbed adolescents. A portion of the teenagers at the Waco Center for Youth (WCY) are children in the managing conservatorship of DHR who need a period of residential treatment in order to improve problematic behavior. DHR provides liaison at the Waco center to ensure successful services for DHR youth by clarifying and coordinating treatment and placement goals between the two agencies.

OBJECTIVES

Continuing goals of the Waco Center for Youth Liaison Project are to facilitate the availability of WCY's services to DHR field staff, to ensure maintenance of support services while DHR children are at the center, and to coordinate planning before and after care for DHR children placed in the center. The objectives of the project for FY '83 are as follows:

- Objective 1: to receive, review, and present DHR referrals to the WCY admissions committee and make formal recommendations to the WCY director;
- Objective 2: to provide current information to DHR regional staff about WCY policies, procedures, and programs;
- Objective 3: to file mental health recommitment applications for DHR children in placement at WCY;
- Objective 4: to represent DHR regional interests by coordinating WCY progress reports;
- Objective 5: to advocate for DHR children's needs while they are in placement at WCY;

- o Objective 6: to develop a permanent plan for every DHR child at the point of entry into the WCY system;

- o Objective 7: to facilitate aftercare/permanency planning by providing consultation and information about aftercare placement resources; and

- o Objective 8: to negotiate for follow-up services, represent children's interests, and communicate their needs to the WCY administration.

STATUS OF OBJECTIVES

The remaining section of this report summarizes progress made toward meeting the project's objectives.

Objective 1: to receive, review, and present DHR referrals to the WCY admissions committee and make formal recommendations to the WCY director. The DHR liaison office has taken an active part in the acceptance and review of referrals to the WCY admissions committee during the past year. The office has actively sought referrals by contacting regional institutional placement coordinators and being on hand to answer questions from social workers about facility operational procedures, admission policies, and treatment techniques. During this project year, 85 referrals were received and presented to the admissions committee; 35 were accepted for admission. The admissions committee has now included the DHR liaison office in discussions and "case staffings" where decisions are made about the types and number of children to be admitted to the center.

Objective 2: to provide current information to DHR regional staff about WCY policies, procedures, and programs. The Waco Center for Youth, with help from the DHR liaison office, has continued to provide information about the program to DHR caseworkers. This year informational packets were mailed to each regional institutional placement coordinator to explain all admission requirements and procedures. The liaison office continued to address individual questions and inquiries. Caseworkers placing children in the facility receive an orientation about WCY and the specific treatment plan for the child.

On May 6-7, 1983, a meeting of DHR institutional placement coordinators (IPCs) was held in Austin. The child psychiatrist from WCY attended the meeting to discuss center procedures and treatment techniques. The IPCs discussed placement and treatment issues and raised relevant questions about services provided by the center.

Throughout the life of the project, the DHR liaison role has continued to expand, with the agreement of WCY and DHR, due to the needs of the increasing number of DHR children placed at the center and the number of DHR caseworkers interacting with center staff.

Objective 3: to file mental health recommitment applications for DHR children in placement at WCY. The procedures for filing petitions for recommitment of children at the center have continued to present problems to the DHR liaison office and to the center staff throughout the project year. Frequently, children at the center on a voluntary basis have left against professional advice before their treatment plans had been adequately implemented. These early departures, which are due in part to the mental health code and in part to the legal entities in the county where the center is located, have become a major issue, and the DHR liaison office has spent a great amount of time trying to solve some of the problems presented.

The DHR liaison person met with a local judge to clarify the recommitment process for children on voluntary status. The court decided to allow selective appointment of attorneys ad litem during the recommitment process for children at the institution on voluntary status if WCY felt that it was in the childrens' best interest to remain at the center against their wishes. Another possible solution has been to return children to their own county for the recommittment hearing. This alternative has not been thoroughly explored.

Objective 4: to represent DHR regional interests by coordinating WCY progress reports. The DHR liaison office was instrumental in keeping DHR caseworkers informed about progress made by children in residence at the center. Comprehensive treatment reviews, psychiatric evaluations, psychological evaluations, and social histories were arranged, monitored, and forwarded to DHR workers responsible for permanent planning for children receiving treatment at WCY. Throughout the project year the office has coordinated treatment plans and relayed them to regional workers and has aided workers by handling many other details as well.

Objective 5: to advocate for DHR children's needs while they are in placement at WCY. Numerous advocacy activities continue. The project staff advocated for coordination of investigations into alleged abuse/neglect of children residing at the center, contacted district judges about the treatment needs of children in care at WCY, arranged for medical care, participated in case staffings, and arranged preplacement visits. Public relations also became a large part of the duties undertaken by the project staff. Meetings with local attorneys, juvenile probation officers, district judges, and parents of children in residence became routine for project staff members.

Objective 6: to develop a permanent plan for every DHR child at the point of entry into the WCY system. Project staff members assisted in making permanent plans for each DHR child who entered the WCY system. Information was shared with leaders of treatment teams.

Objective 7: to facilitate aftercare/permanency planning by providing consultation and information about aftercare placement resources. The DHR liaison office monitored aftercare/permanent plans once they were established. The project staff often was able to intervene when inappropriate plans for a child were being pursued. Alternative placements resulting from these interventions included commitment to an MHMR facility, placement in a state hospital, or the prevention of children's premature removal from WCY by their parents.

Objective 8: to negotiate for follow-up services, represent children's interests, and communicate their needs to the WCY administration. During the past project year, three requests were made for community-based services funds.

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR

The new DHR liaison person was hired on November 1, 1982. One of her primary tasks was to facilitate speedy preplacement and admission of DHR children. Procedures were established to speed up the handling of referrals from the region, in order to minimize the time that a caseworker has to wait for a decision from WCY's admissions committee. For example, complete admissions packets were placed in the offices of regional IPCs.

New procedures also were set up to handle another situation--allegations of previously undisclosed abuse or neglect that come out during the treatment process at WCY or during the preadmission interview (when the child is still residing in his home county). In both instances, the allegation is referred for investigation to the DHR region that includes the child's home county.

DHR agreed to assist WCY in disseminating information about the center's services. A project staff member served on the committee that developed a brochure for this purpose. Financial assistance will be given by DHR to disseminate this information.

The central office of the Protective Services for Children Branch has decided to provide continuation funding for the DHR liaison. The position will remain at the Waco Center for Youth in Waco, Texas.

PROBLEM AREAS AND NEEDS OF THE PROJECT

Throughout the project year the DHR census at the center has been considered. DHR children totaled less than one-third of the center's capacity for three-quarters of the year. It was originally expected that DHR clients would total two-thirds of the client population. Admission procedures were reviewed to facilitate placement of DHR children at the Waco Center for Youth. Work was done to better inform DHR workers about services available at WCY and the availability of beds for children in need of residential treatment. The DHR census is still low, although it has steadily increased throughout the year. At the end of the year the census was the highest it had ever been.